An Awful Florida Memory

If you happened to be bored enough to listen to my audio recording “The Shack”, and thought that was bad, well… there’s another horrible story that I haven’t shared yet, I’ve only briefly touched on it.

It’s the first place we moved to upon needing to leave our (somewhat) peaceful existence in the trailer, (where we dwelt for about 7 years or so), I don’t have a name for the place just yet, other than the fact it was a duplex thing owned by a horribly mean guy (who, I didn’t know at the time was responsible for feeding crack cocaine to the only human I had in Florida, resulting in complete and utter destruction on every level, God have mercy)

So God does work in mysterious ways, and He used this Mean Man to provide shelter to us for about a year and a half, he was a neighbor who lived nearby our trailer. I guess I need a name for this place, owned by Mean Man - I’ll call it The Bunker. Because that’s what it felt like I was living in, while I was there. It was surreal, just one more chapter of the horror story that was unfolding all around me. I did write a little bit about it, in Roaches To The Rescue (on a blog), https://amys-room.blogspot.com/2023/05/roaches-to-rescue.html
but I think that’s as far as I got describing the whole ordeal there.

It was summer of 2018, and the owners of the trailer we had been renting informed us of an upcoming big rent increase that applied to the whole trailer park, and my husband could not process this information, it created absolute chaos, to the point of him just shutting down in bed, and me wondering what on earth was happening (still didn’t know about his problem, guess that one’s on me, looking back how could I have missed it?)

I knew this would be one of those situations that would require my brain, not his, so I crawled out of my wheelchair and prayed for wisdom and guidance, that God would help us, open up a door for us in this impending emergency, otherwise we would have truly been made homeless.

After praying I knew what to do, and I woke up my husband and told him to immediately go over to talk to Mean Man, and ask him of we could rent out the other half of his place. (It was a duplex, but hadn’t been occupied for a while, it was closed off, he and his very elderly mother decided to never rent it out again, that is, until we asked…)

Mean Man said ok, but had to call his old mother for the green light, because she was still the formal owner of the place. An old (in her 90’s) French woman who came over on a boat sometime after WW2 from Belgium. She was kind, but intimidating. I did not enjoy interacting with her in the slightest.

She met up with us, gave us a “tour” of the duplex side, I in my wheelchair, my husband looking around, already hating the place, it was a desperate moment, but we were in. She had sworn off renting to anyone ever again, but there we were, and there God was, opening yet another door for us.

We were given a key, and the rest is a blur. All of this happening under a ticking clock, it was just days left before the rent was due in the new amount, or we would be evicted for non payment. My husband was being unfairly treated and pressured by one of the landlords to work even more to pay off the rent increase, which he was not capable of doing. He was sort of a handyman for the trailer park, an experienced electrician, but he struggled with many problems, mental issues being the main one, which limited him in the real world. He could function, but had his limitations, and this situation was just too much. I had to step up and take over, and he pretty much did whatever I said at this point, and I had no idea what to do, so I prayed for every direction, and told my husband. It got us to a new place, which had its own set of problems.

The day we could move in, we went over there (on foot, of course, we never had a car in Florida, he couldn't and I wouldn't, for many reasons)…He pushed me in my wheelchair down the street, with my dog riding on my lap as always, we approached the front door, the key didn't work. So my husband walked back to our trailer to get a crowbar, and returned to the new place. A neighbor apparently saw him walking up to the place with a crowbar and called the police, which we didn't know about until we were walking back to our trailer. We were hemmed up and questioned, why were we trying to break in to that locked up place, and that's when I saw the outside of our own gate - it had some strange spray painted symbols/markings on it, which I later learned were to mark our trailer as ….who even knows, but it had to do with my husband and his shady "associates" who would later threaten us almost daily.

So somehow he wasn't arrested for breaking in our own place, the cop believed us, which was nice, and that day was just the beginning.

I can't even begin to describe the stress of trying to get out of our trailer on time, and into the Bunker, unable to walk, my husband's brain completely elsewhere, and trying to appease Mean Man, who lived on the other side of the duplex.

I decided to start the cleaning of the Bunker on my own, while my husband handled the trailer, I gathered up all of my essentials and my pets, my husband rolled me again down the street, then went back to the trailer…. for a few days. (It was a pattern, him going awol for long periods of time, I was led to believe he was working overnight, etc)

The Bunker had electricity on, but no water. It also had a sunken living room upon entry, with a step up to the kitchen and a step up to the hallway, which I was unable to manage in my chair. So, I tossed the chair aside, and just crawled around on my hands and knees, cleaning, touching filthy rat poop old carpet, all the while still dealing with random nerve issues, such as my right hand and arm being too weak to use (my husband actually washed my hair for me over the bathtub when my arm didn't work), but now he was on some other planet mentally and lost in addiction, I couldn't fix him, only survive.

So my hair was absolutely matted up in the back for a few weeks during this time, I couldn't even brush out the tangles, he wasn't fully present to help me in that way anymore, ok, I know how to keep on going, even if things are falling apart. I let my hair remain matted and dirty (even the shower had a step up, I couldn't get in, there was no water at that, I used jugs of water he would bring over to me, along with food)…

When the water to our place was finally turned on, I didn't even think rationally, my brain was off, so it didn't occur to me to let the water run for a bit before drinking…. yes, I turned on the tap, filled up a glass, and drank it. Yes, I was made very sick from this stupidity, imagine having bathroom emergencies while crawling on all fours, trying to climb up on a toilet. Nope. My husband brought me over the bedside potty thing I had to use when I did something to my rib, that's why I had it, and now it came in handy again. I was sick for days. And crawling in rat poop. The old woman gave me an old vacuum, have you ever used a Hoover from the 1970's on all fours, with one arm barely working? I can't even. Just one more chapter in my Great Florida Adventure.

My husband was in and out over the next few days/weeks, I don't remember, I just remember being at the Bunker alone most of the time, from the beginning to the end. When he did come home it was usually in a fit of rage, I would fight sometimes, most of the time hide in my room with a locked door. Pretend to be sleeping, ignore the raging and cussing and slamming of things and general violence all around, I learned to starve it. Starve the violence. Stay quiet, don't respond. Without an audience, it stops eventually. Without a terrified person on the receiving end, it fades. Life skills. I learned them.

One memory of that place, took place on the day I found out my Grandmother had died. Just hours after learning of her passing, a knock at the door, it was a cop, there I sat in my wheelchair, bewildered, why is there a cop here? I looked past him, and there was Mean Man, leaning over the fence, laughing. Apparently we were on the verge of eviction there too, for non payment. I had no idea. Money matters were off topic for me, I wasn't allowed. Financial abuse, but just one more price I had to pay for the time I lived in Florida, which was well worth it. I come away with unseen and unspoken treasures from my experiences there…

After that happened, and Mean Man went back to his side, I just sat down and… didn't cry. I couldn't feel a thing. My beloved Grandmother, gone, but I could not shed a tear. To this day my tears are seldom seen, only in happy moments do my eyes well up. Happy tears are ok.

So why did I say this place was like a bunker? I only left when I had to, instinct kept me there, besides, where am I going to go and what am I going to do, in a wheelchair, no money, no car, a husband who was now a stranger, I had no say so, no control, I could only stay put and trust God. Just wait on God.

One night, I was sitting in my chair on the front porch, looking up at the beautiful night sky, and I was whispering prayers to God, thanking Him for protecting me, leading me, providing for me… I didn't know the window to the other side of the duplex was open, and someone began mocking me… I heard whispers, but in a silly way, they were letting me know they could hear me, and mocking my praying. It was scary, I wasn't afraid of the person doing it, just aware of the spiritual danger that surrounded me.

I began to close up even more at that place, hiding alone in my room all the time (with my dog), and this is where I made some very deep and heartfelt voice recordings, there in the Bunker. No one could hear me, I was always alone, the walls were hurricane proof concrete, for real. So, really like a bunker. It was like where I was sheltering in a very real war going on, all around me. And it was there that God reached my very heart on some things, and I spent many hours deep in prayer, on the floor, in true repentance. For so many things. For everything. I think, and I say this with confidence, that I was born again in that bunker.

Before knowing that Mean Man's house was really a duplex with another side to it, all the way back in 2010, after meeting him and hanging out there a few times with lots of other folks, I had a brief vision - I saw a room, it seemed to have light yellow walls, and a place for me, a bed, and around the bed was a white curtain, much like a changing room curtain… I sensed this place was a secret room at Mean Man's house, but I didn't know how or where, but in the vision, I heard in my spirit: "There is room for change".

I kept that vision in my heart all of those years in that trailer, but sometimes at night, when I looked down the street, my eyes fell on Mean Man's place, and I wondered, why did the vision take place in his house, and where was this yellow room that God was showing me?

As it turned out, the duplex was painted a light yellow, and yes indeed, my room in that bunker was a room for change…. a changing room.

God's gentle white curtain shielded me and gave me privacy while He ministered to my bewildered and broken spirit, and He reached me, and allowed me to internalize and process what He was showing me, then put it on my heart to share with others, in my broken imperfection, some of the things I learned.

So, that is the story of the Bunker, and so many things I'm leaving out, I just can't lol….My life has been comically traumatic, and I've coped the best I can, a broken mess I remain, but at peace in God's hand.

What on earth more could I possibly ask for?

~*~

I’m still unable to connect, but I love and miss everyone, and hope for the best for everyone, always.

Amy Catherine Lohrman
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one of the compilations I made of some recordings done in The Bunker -

https://archive.org/details/christian-talk